# American tourist denied bail after attempting contact with North Sentinel tribe



An American tourist has been denied bail after allegedly attempting to make contact with one of the world’s most isolated tribes on North Sentinel Island, part of India’s Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Mykhailo Viktorovych Polyakov, 24, was arrested on 31 March for reportedly entering the island, which is strictly off-limits to outsiders under Indian law.

According to reports from Port Blair, the capital of the federal territory, a court rejected Polyakov’s bail application and extended his judicial custody pending further hearings, with his next court appearance scheduled for Thursday. The 24-year-old, who is known as a YouTuber, arrived in Port Blair on 27 March and was detained just three days later after local residents informed police that he had taken a boat to North Sentinel Island.

Polyakov is accused of breaching the Andaman & Nicobar Islands (Protection of Aboriginal Tribes) Regulation of 1956, which prohibits entry within five kilometres of North Sentinel to safeguard the tribe from external threats such as disease and to preserve their traditional way of life. The isolated Sentinelese tribe comprises about 150 members, and very little is known about their customs due to their long-standing isolation.

Police officials revealed that Polyakov undertook careful preparation for his journey, including studying sea conditions, tides, and accessibility. He allegedly sailed for nine hours in a rubber dinghy equipped with an outboard motor to reach the island and used binoculars to scout the area, reportedly seeing no inhabitants. He is said to have left a can of diet coke and a coconut on the shore as an “offering” to the tribe while documenting his visit with a GoPro camera.

Senior police officer Hargobinder Singh Dhaliwal commented, “He planned meticulously over several days to visit the island and make contact with the tribe.” The police view Polyakov’s actions as a serious threat to the Sentinelese people given their vulnerability and the strict legal prohibitions designed to prevent contact.

Authorities seized Polyakov’s mobile phone and camera as part of their investigation, in addition to a bottle containing sand allegedly taken from the island. Should he be found guilty, he faces a prison sentence of up to five years and a monetary fine.

This incident is reminiscent of previous confrontations with the tribe, which has consistently resisted contact. In 2018, American missionary John Allen Chau was fatally shot by Sentinelese tribespeople after attempting to preach Christianity on the island. A decade earlier, in 2006, two Indian fishermen who accidentally drifted near North Sentinel were also killed, and the tribe responded aggressively to a low-flying military helicopter.

Caroline Pearce, director of Survival International—a charity devoted to protecting indigenous tribes—described the incident as “deeply disturbing.” Speaking to the Independent, she said, “It beggars belief that someone could be that reckless and idiotic. This person’s actions not only endangered his own life, they put the lives of the entire Sentinelese tribe at risk. It is very well known by now that uncontacted peoples have no immunity to common outside diseases like flu or measles, which could completely wipe them out.” Pearce emphasised that the tribe’s desire to avoid outside contact has long been clearly understood.

North Sentinel Island remains one of the last places on Earth where a small group lives entirely separate from the modern world, protected by stringent regulations and geographical isolation. The recent events have once again highlighted the ongoing challenges related to preserving the rights and safety of such indigenous populations.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://spectrumlocalnews.com/nys/buffalo/international/2025/04/07/mykhailo-viktorovych-polyakov-diet-coke-north-sentinel-island-arrested-india> - Corroborates Mykhailo Polyakov's arrest for entering North Sentinel Island to contact the Sentinelese tribe and the legal consequences he faces. This article also mentions the dangers posed by outsiders due to the tribe's isolation.
* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ph64whhGjwM> - Supports the news about Mykhailo Viktorovych Polyakov's attempt to reach the Sentinelese tribe by visiting North Sentinel Island, highlighting his actions and subsequent arrest.
* <https://economictimes.com/magazines/panache/who-is-the-us-youtuber-arrested-for-entering-forbidden-indian-island-thrillseeker-mykhailo-polyakov-once-posed-with-talibans/articleshow/120083846.cms> - Provides background information on Mykhailo Polyakov and his previous adventures, as well as details about his arrest and the threat his actions posed to the Sentinelese tribe.
* <https://www.euronews.com/2025/04/07/us-tourist-arrested-in-india-for-trying-to-make-contact-with-an-isolated-tribe> - Reports on the arrest of Mykhailo Viktorovych Polyakov for attempting to contact the Sentinelese tribe and highlights the legal and safety implications of his actions.
* <https://eonline.com/news/1415831/youtuber-arrested-for-trying-to-reach-isolated-tribe-leaving-diet-coke> - Supports the story of Mykhailo Viktorovych Polyakov's arrest after attempting to make contact with the Sentinelese tribe, including his method of leaving a can of Diet Coke as an offering.